

Appl. No.: 09/991,883
Amdt. dated 09/09/2005
Reply to Office Action of 06/16/05

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The final Official Action rejects Claims 21-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by a Business Travel News article entitled "Megas at a Crossroads" ("Megas"). In addition, the final Official Action rejects Claims 27-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Megas in view of articles relating to Eventsource (retrieved from the wayback machine on June 7, 2005 for any linkage of January 31, 1998).

As explained below, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 21, 22, and 24 are currently distinguishable from the cited references. Applicants have amended independent Claims 23, 25, and 26 to more patentably distinguish the cited art. Applicants submit that the amendments do not raise new issues as the amendments are in line with the amendments made to independent Claims 21, 22, and 24 in the previous response. In light of the claim amendments and subsequent remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the claims.

Megas states, in the context of prospective business plans for American Express, that "the agency has developed a PC-based product that optimizes site selection by looking at attendees' points of origin, the land arrangements and the meal costs, and then producing a list of options for meeting sites ranked by cost" (Megas, page 2). In addition, in an unrelated portion of the article regarding the combination of travel bookings with expense reporting, Megas discloses that "[o]ur vision is to allow people to get information and make reservations through e-mail, and on the back end to combine billing information and travel data and feed it back to the traveler on the same email, allowing him to create an electronic expense report" (Megas, page 2).

In the Response to Arguments, the Examiner finds that because Megas discloses combining billing and travel data into one email, the Examiner believes Megas discloses sending the all-inclusive cost of travel in a ranked order. In addition, the Examiner finds that "points of origin" could be considered a preference or a geographic location, with respect to independent Claims 21-26. The Examiner further finds that defining minimum requirements recited in Claims 23, 25, and 26 could be inputting the attendees' points of origin as a minimum requirement.

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Independent Claims 23, 25, and 26 provide a method, computer-readable medium, and computer system, respectively, for evaluating a plurality of potential meeting facilities. Claims 23, 25, and 26 have been amended to recite that the all-inclusive cost-calculation includes at least costs associated with travel and lodging. Independent Claims 21, 22, and 24 provide a method, computer system, and computer-readable medium, respectively, for selecting a facility for hosting a meeting. Claims 21, 22, and 24 include a similar recitation as that of Claims 23, 25, and 26, namely, calculating an all-inclusive cost that includes at least costs associated with travel and lodging.

In contrast, Megas does not teach or suggest calculating an all-inclusive cost, including at least costs associated with travel and lodging, for hosting a meeting at each of a plurality of potential meeting facilities, as recited by independent Claims 21, 22, and 24. Moreover, Megas does not disclose receiving a ranked list of meeting facilities, where each facility is ranked based on an all-inclusive cost calculation corresponding to an estimated total cost of holding the meeting at the meeting facility, and where the all-inclusive cost includes at least costs associated with travel and lodging, as recited by independent Claims 23, 25, and 26. Megas discloses using meal costs, as well as attendees' points of origin and land arrangements to rank meeting sites. Thus, Megas nowhere teaches or suggests using an all-inclusive cost that includes, at a minimum, lodging and transportation costs to rank each meeting site. At most, Megas teaches using meal costs, which is unlike the claimed invention that calculates an all-inclusive cost corresponding to an estimated total cost of holding the meeting at the meeting facility.

Although Megas discloses using attendees' points of origin, Megas does not specify that travel costs associated with the attendees' points of origin are taken into consideration as opposed to merely determining the relative convenience or inconvenience of travel from the various points of origin. Furthermore, Megas discloses that land arrangements are considered when ranking the meeting sites, but again, Megas does not teach or suggest if and how the land arrangements are taken into consideration with respect to cost.

The portion of Megas relied upon by the Examiner that discloses the combination of booking travel reservations with expense reporting is unrelated to the meeting planning portion of Megas. Megas simply discloses that American Express was developing a system that would

Appl. No.: 09/991,883
Amdt. dated 09/09/2005
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allow users to book travel and receive billing information via email for expense reporting, which was unrelated to the system being developed for optimizing meeting site selection. Thus, the portion of Megas that discloses booking travel reservations is not considered in ranking the meeting sites by cost. Even if both portions of Megas were considered to be related, Megas does not teach or suggest calculating an all-inclusive cost that includes lodging costs, as Megas only discloses meal costs for ranking meeting sites by cost.

Therefore Megas does not teach or suggest calculating an all-inclusive cost that includes at least costs associated with travel and lodging, or ranking meeting facilities based on an all-inclusive cost-calculation that includes at least costs associated with travel and lodging. As such, the rejection of independent Claims 21-26 and those claims that depend therefrom under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is overcome.

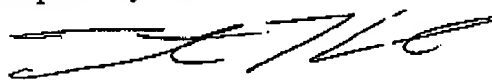
Appl. No.: 09/991,883
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CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments that do not raise new issues and remarks presented above, Applicants submit that all the claims of the present application are in condition for allowance. As such, the issuance of a Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully requested. In order to expedite the examination of the present application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney in order to resolve any remaining issues.

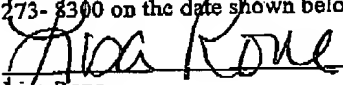
It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



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I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Fax No. (571) 273-8300 on the date shown below.	
 Lisa Rone	Date <u>9/9/05</u>

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